

THE REHEARSAL.

Numb. 57

1. The Succession of the First-Born, as well as the Species of Government, further Demonstrated by the four Rules in The Short Method with the Deists. And shew'd to be Infallible.
2. The same Confirm'd by the History and Authority of the Holy Scriptures.
3. The Right of the Primo-Geniture Establish'd by God at the Beginning. Shew'd in the Instance of Cain and Abel.
4. The Succession in the Primo-Geniture from Adam to Noah.

From Saturday August the 25th, to Saturday September the 1st. 1705.

1. Country-man. **Y**OU shew'd me last time, Master, the Right of the Primogeniture to succeed in the Government, from the Law of Nature, that is the Common Consent of Mankind from the Beginning. Which must be either the Law of Nature; or such an Universal Tradition, as Descended all the way from Adam, through all his Posterities. For how, Otherwise, could they All have Agreed, far Distant Nations, that had no knowledge of, or Correspondence with one Another, in one and the self same Notion, if it was not either the Dictate of Nature, or such an Universal Tradition?

This, if I mistake not, is the same sort of Argument, which is in a little small Book you once gave me, Master, Call'd, *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. Which is fitted to a Plain Country-Man's Capacity, that he can tell it over upon his Fingers. For Example, Master, give me leave, and I will Apply it to the Subject we are upon.

The first of his Four Marks is, That the Subject Matter be some Fact of which our Outward Senses can Judge. Now, there is nothing more so than Government, and the Succession of it, in any Country: Witness our own. For there is no Man, Woman, or Child of Ten Years Old, but must know whether they Live under a King, or a Common-Wealth. And whether the King's Eldest Son do's Succeed, or not?

The Second Mark is, That such Fact be Publick, in the Eyes of the World, and not Done in a Corner.

This Agrees Super-Eminently to Government, which in its Nature must be Publick. And the Succession as Publick.

The third Mark is, That Acts and Monuments Remain of it.

Now, though this be Needless as to Government, which Always Remains a Monument of it self; yet there are Many other such Acts and Monuments. As the Deeds of Every Man's Estate. Every Bond and Publick Writing, bearing Date such a Year of such a Reign. Every Action at Law, every Assizes and Sessions. Every time we go to Church, where the King, Queen, or Common-Wealth is Pray'd for. Besides the Oaths Requir'd. And our Daily Conversation, where it is Impossible to Miss it.

And as Notorious it is, Whether a Monarchy be Elective or Hereditary? Or if Hereditary, whether it is the Rule or Custom in our own Country, for the Eldest Son to Succeed? We call him Prince of Wales in England, during his Father's Life. Who knows not, That Char. I. Succeeded as Eldest Son to Jam. I. And Char. II. as Eldest Son to Char. I. And Jam. II. as Brother and Heir to Char. II. He having no Lawful Son?

And though there have been several Invasions made upon this Hereditary Rule of Succession, in the Histories of England, yet you have Taught me in your Last, to Reckon these among the Exceptions from the General Rule. And they Appear to be Exceptions, because in the

Contest of York and Lancaster, Both pretended to be Next in Blood to the Crown. Therefore, Both yielded That to be the Rule. And this Exception do's Affirm the Rule.

And where more open Invasions have been made, and the Rule it self Broke through; yet this was never Done, but it was known; PUBLICKLY and NOTORIOUSLY Known. As in the Usurpation of Oliver, &c. So that this too was an Affirmation of the Rule, because we say it was a Breach of it. Which could not be Broken, if there had been No such Rule.

The fourth and Last Mark in the Method with the Deists, is, That such Acts and Monuments shoud Commence from the Time that such Facts were said to be Done.

And for this, What I have said to the third Mark Clears it. For besides that Government is a Standing Monument of it self; there can be no Government wherein there are not Many other Acts (some of which I have before Nam'd) that must be Co-Eval with it, as being Inseparable from it. As Inseparable as Light from the Sun. And this not only as to Government in the General, but as to the Species or Kind of it; And likewise as to the Rule of Succession.

Now, Master, if these four Marks are Infallible, as that Author says (And he has not yet been Disprov'd, that I have heard of) where they All meet, in any Particular Fact; How much more, in a thing of such Publick and Notorious Nature as Government, And the Succession of it.

From these Reasons I have Concluded with my self, upon the Foundation you have Given me; That since Hereditary Monarchy, and the Succession of the Eldest Son was the Way of the whole Earth, from Adam to the first Exception of the Grecian Common-Wealths, (And still Continues in the far Greatest Part of the World to this Day) That it was the Institution of God. Besides the Argument from Nature, of which you have spoke. And that it Utterly Destroys the Notion of an Independent State of Nature. And this Argument I take to be Infallible.

(2) But still Master, I must not Forget what you Promis'd me last time, to shew me how the Holy Scriptures do Agree with all this. For that will be a Mighty Confirmation.

Rehears. That the Succession of the Eldest Son to the Throne was the Rule in the Kingdom of Judah is so Obvious, that it woud be in vain to give particular Instances.

This Rule was Broke sometimes, by the special Command of God himself. Who is Master of his own Rules but We are not. He is not Ty'd to those Rules, to which He Tyes Us. Thus he gave the Crown to Solomon even before he was Born. 1. Chr. XXII. 9. 10. And Solomon own'd the Right of Adoniah by Nature and the Rule of Succession, when he said, 1. King 2. 22. Ask for him the Kingdom also; for he is mine Elder.

der Brother. But for the Ordinary Rule of Succession, it is Particularly Remarked, 2 Chron. 22. 1. That the Youngest was made King, because All the Eldest were Slain. And 2 King. 3. 27. His Eldest Son, that shou'd have Reigned in his stead.

This Rule was likewise Broke in the Rebellion of the Ten Tribes from the House of David, who after that, set up a kind of Elective Kingdom. But of these God says, Hof. viii. 4. They have set up Kings, but not by me, they have made Princes, and I knew it not.

But to shew, That the Right and Pre-Eminence of the Primogeniture was a General and Receiv'd Notion, God expresses his High Favour to David, in that former, saying, Psal. LXXXIX. 27. I will make him my First-Born, Higher than the Kings of the Earth.

And long before that, Jacob express'd the Dignity of the First Born, with a Reason even from Nature, Gen. XLIX. 3. Reuben, thou art my First-Born, my Might, and the Beginning of my Strength: The Excellency of Dignity, and the Excellency of Power.

This is pursuant to what his Father Isaac had said to him, when he Blessed him, as his First-Born, Gen. XXVII. 29. Be Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mothers Sons bow down to thee. And when he Confirm'd the Blessing of Birth-Right to him, which he then saw, being a Prophet, that God had Transferr'd to Jacob, he said to Esau, now in the Person of the Younger, ver. 37. I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren, have I given to him for Servants. Here is the Succession of the Eldest into the full Power and Authority of the Father. After whose Death, he stood as Father to the Rest of his Brethren, who thenceforward, became his Subjects and his Servants.

Let me Add to this, that Christ is call'd our Elder Brother Rom. VIII. 29. The First Fruits of them that Slept 1 Cor. XV. 20. and the First Begotten of the Dead; Rev. 1. 5. And all this, to Express His High Authority over us. In the Notion we must suppose then Currant in the World. And which had obtain'd long Before, as I have shew'd. And the Church Triumphant is call'd the Church of the First Born. Heb. XII. 23. Still Magnifying the Dignity of the First-Born.

Country-m. I had not indeed Consider'd this so narrowly. And it seems Plain to me, That this must be the Notion of the most Early Times. And from what has been said before, I can have no Doubt but that this same Rule and Dominion of the Primo-Geniture had Descended to them, all the way Down from Adam. For if it had not been the Rule Fix'd and Determin'd by Adam, it wou'd have been so great an Innovation, and an Usurpation upon the Rights and Liberties of all others, That whenever it came First to be set up, in any after Age it must have met with Great Opposition. And cou'd never have been Tamely submitted to. More than if the French King (for Example) shou'd now set up for Universal Monarchy. Or any other Pretend to it by a New and Unheard of Title.

Nor cou'd such a thing be brought to pass in a Day. Or Stolen in upon the World, in a Private Manner, without any Bodies Knowing it, or taking any Notice of it. All Histories must be full of it. Such a wonderful Revolution must have been the Subject of every Pen. But since nothing of this Appears, and we find the Primo-Geniture in Quiet and Peaceable Possession all along, even in the Earliest times, we cannot but conclude, that it was so from the Beginning.

(3) But yet, Master, if we cou'd find any thing of this Notion to have been in the very

Days of Adam. It wou'd Open the Eyes even of the Blind.

Rehears. We find it even in those Days. For thus God Expostulates with Cain. Gen. IV. 7. Why art thou Wroth, &c. If thou do'st well, shalt thou not be Accepted? And if thou do'st not well, (or as other Translations Read it, Though thou do'st not well) Sin lieth at the Door, And unto thee (or as others Read it, Notwithstanding unto thee) shall be his Desire, and thou shalt Rule over him. Our Margin Reads it, Thou shalt have the Excellency, and he shall be Subject unto thee. These are the same words, which I have before Quoted, wherein God Establishes the Dominion of Adam over Eve. Gen. 3. 16. And here the Dominion of Cain over Abel is Established in as Full and Ample a Manner. Which cou'd be upon no Account but that of the Primo-Geniture. For Abel was more Belov'd of God. And God gives this as a Reason to Cain why he ought not to be Wroth, because God had Rejected his Sacrifice, and Accepted that of Abel. For that if he did Well, he shou'd be Accepted as well as Abel. But though he did not Well, and that Sin lay at his Door; yet that did not take away his Right of Primo-Geniture, and the Consequent Right of Dominion, which he shou'd have over Abel, when he Succeeded to his Father, in the Supreme FATHERLY Authority, not only over his own Children, but over his Brethren, even all the Children of Adam. For that Notion was not yet Born, that Dominion is Founded in Grace. And this Right of the Primo-Geniture is not here Mention'd as then Founded or Granted by God to Cain, if we may so suppose, to Pacifie him for his Sin, and Abel's Righteousness wou'd be a strange Reason for God's giving him the Dominion over Abel: But this of the Primo-Geniture is spoke of as a thing then Known, and Established; and as such, Urg'd to Cain, to shew the Un-Reasonableness of his Discontent, when the Succession into the full Power and Authority of his Father, was Sett'd on him, and not on Abel. So that by this we must Suppose, that the Right of the Primo-Geniture was Established by God at the very First, as a Fundamental Principle.

(4.) Country-m. If this were so, we might expect to find something of it in the Successions after Adam, before the Flood. Tho' what is Related of them, is so very short, all Compriz'd in the fifth Chapter of Genesis, that we have nothing but their Names and Ages set down.

Rehears. It may be Short in other things. But it is Full as to the Primo-Geniture. For indeed it is nothing else but a List or Catalogue of the first-Born, and of their first-Born, from Adam to Noah. These were the Patriarchs before the Flood. There are none Nam'd there but the first-Born. The Rest are Pass'd over under the General Name of Sons and Daughters.

The word Patriarch signifies the Chief or Governour of the Country. And is Equivalent with King or Emperor. King David is call'd Patriarch. Act 2. 29. So that whereas our Contents to the 5th of Gen. is, The Genealogy, Age and Death of the Patriarchs from Adam to Noah, It might as well have been put of the Kings from Adam to Noah. For the Words are Synonymous. And if a King may be call'd a Patriarch, a Patriarch may be call'd a King.

So that here we have a Plain Deduction of Government, in the Monarchical and no other Form; and the Succession of it in the Primo-Geniture, from Adam to Noah. Next time we will begin after the Flood, and see how it went then.